

VZCZCXRO0655
RR RUEHBZ RUEH DU RUEHJO RUEHMR RUEHRN
DE RUEHDR #0173 0751409
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 161409Z MAR 09
FM AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8344
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE
RUEHJB/AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA 2844
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 3365
RUEHLGB/AMEMBASSY KIGALI 1292
RUEH KI/AMEMBASSY KINSHASA 0307
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 1204
RUEHDS/USMISSION USAU ADDIS ABABA
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0490

UNCLAS DAR ES SALAAM 000173

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF/E JLIDDLE
KAMPALA FOR REFCOORD

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: Tanzania Refugee Update: Resettlement on track for 1972
Burundians, Repatriations of others on hold

¶1. On March 6, UNCHR Chief of Mission Yacoub El Hillo briefed donors on the Country Operations Plan (COP) and status of refugees in Tanzania. El Hillo said the process of granting citizenship to the nearly 200,000 Burundi refugees from the 1972 exodus continued to be on schedule and had the highest UNHCR in Tanzania priority. He anticipated UNHCR will submit a new budget request to donor nations soon for the next phase of integrating newly naturalized refugees into Tanzanian society, but did estimate costs. In addition to the 1972 Burundian population, as of March 12, there were 106,000 Burundian and Congolese (DRC) refugees (down from 215,000 at the start of 2008) in three northwest Tanzanian camps.

¶2. Refugees were distributed in three camps: Mtabili, with 41,365 Burundi refugees; Nyarugusu, with 37,864 Burundians; and Lugufu, with 24,856 Congolese. The Kanembwa camp is officially closed, but still has 1,840 refugees: 1,080 from DRC, 559 from Burundi, and a mixed population of 201 other refugees, primarily from Somalia. There are three 1972 settlement locations of Burundi refugees: Ulyankulu, 50,626; Katumba, 88,954; and Mishomo, 54,980. There is also a population of 1,527 Somali refugees in Chogo, about 217 miles north of Dar es Salaam, who are a part of the naturalization and integration program.

¶3. Due to the social pressures on the Government of Burundi to absorb returning refugees, the repatriation process was put on hold until April. Once repatriation resumes, El Hillo said, there will be two convoys each week to Burundi of about 500 refugees each, with a goal of returning approximately 30,000 refugees this year. Due to the continued political uncertainty in the DRC, it was not anticipated that any DRC refugees will return this year.

¶4. The issue of relocating newly naturalized refugees away from their current locations remained controversial. Some questioned the wisdom of moving people away from a place where they are settled and productive to a new place to start from scratch. However, the idea has a historical reference for Tanzania. Founding President Julius Nyerere saw moving people from one place to another as a way to prevent tribalism and to create a cohesive nation. During his time, all children attended secondary school away from their home, and all graduates had to travel yet again to another location for a year of national service. Still, the Ministry of Home Affairs is considering the argument for leaving some refugees in place.

¶5. El Hillo said there is continuing good cooperation between UNHCR and GOT; past harassment of refugees and aid workers by local government officials has decreased. It remained illegal for refugees to live outside of the camps and settlements. Refugees could only travel outside the camps with a permit for the purpose of collecting firewood within two and a half miles of the camps. Refugees and asylum seekers who were apprehended outside camps

without permits were generally sentenced to community service, rather than imprisonment and deportation as had been the case in earlier years. However, due to the delays in repatriating refugees, the government eased some of its "push" strategies to motivate refugees to return home. In Lungufu camp, for example, both primary and secondary schools have been reopened.

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